

such as age, marital status, and literacy that might shed more light on the economic characteristics of individuals that stayed or left the city in the aftermath of the riot. City directory data does not allow us to establish what portion of the decline in population is attributable to natural causes, like death from old age rather than deaths due to the riot. In addition, it does not allow the researcher to distinguish clearly between increases in persons listed in the directory due to in-migration. The directory only documented workers and businesses located within Wilmington's city limits. Workers who lived in the "county" but worked in the city are not represented.

Additionally, the sample of business owners could suffer from selection bias. The directories do not have information on who chose to be listed in the directories. In addition, there is no information on the cost of having a business listed in the directory. In conducting this study, the implicit assumption has been that the individuals who chose to be included in the business section are probably the more affluent business owners, not those engaged in smaller or less successful business ventures. Despite the many problems with using directory data, this is the only source that provides data within an interval short enough to assess the immediate impact of the riot. After reviewing available census data, the population sizes between the two directory waves seem to be fairly reflective of the workforce of the city of Wilmington before and after the riots.

In addition to directory data, the study also utilizes historical tax data. In order to analyze the effect of the riots on property ownership, a data set that includes all black property holders in the Wilmington, North Carolina in 1897 and 1900 was compiled. The tax records contain the name, age, race, and the value of assets of all property owners in the city. An attempt was made to collect tax data on the entire population of Wilmington